

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01     PARIS 35782 01 OF 03 031313Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /074 W

----- 108463

R 031358Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7616

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USNMR SHAPE

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 35782

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PGOV, PINT, PARM, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH DEFENSE MANPOWER: A SMALLER ARMY?

REFS: A. PARIS 34006 DTG 161819Z NOV 76 NOTAL

B. PARIS 33654 DTG 121828Z NOV 76 NOTAL

1. SUMMARY: THE ANNUAL DEFENSE DEBATE IN PARIS HAS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02     PARIS 35782 01 OF 03 031313Z

RAISED INTER ALIA QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER THE FRENCH

ARMY SHOULD BE REDUCED IN SIZE. INTERTWINED WITH THAT DISCUSSION IS THE REITERATION BY THE LEFT THAT THE TERM OF MILITARY SERVICE FOR CONSCRIPTS SHOULD BE SHORTENED TO LESS THAN THE CURRENT 12 MONTHS. ON THE OTHER SIDE A FEW GAULLISTS HAVE BEGUN TO ADVOCATE AN ALL VOLUNTEER ARMY. NONE OF THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE RESOLVED IN THE SHORT TERM, BUT BY 1980, OR PERHAPS SOONER, THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE FRENCH ARMY COULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED. END SUMMARY

2. INTRODUCTION: REFERENCE A DESCRIBED THE PASSAGE OF THE FRENCH CY 1977 DEFENSE BUDGET AND OUTLINED THE THEME THAT THERE IS STRONG SUPPORT FOR A VIGOROUS DEFENSE EFFORT ACROSS THE FRENCH POLITICAL SPECTRUM. WE NOTED IN THAT MESSAGE THAT THERE ARE DEEP DIFFERENCES ON HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE OPTIMAL RESULTS. THIS DESPATCH ADDRESSES ONE OF THE MOST CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, THAT OF MILITARY MANPOWER, IN TERMS OF TWO QUESTIONS NOW UNDER DISCUSSION IN PARIS DEFENSE CIRCLES:

- HOW LARGE SHOULD THE ARMED FORCES BE?
- HOW LONG SHOULD THE TERM OF ACTIVE DUTY BE FOR CONSCRIPTS?

3. DISCUSSION: AT THE OUTSET IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS LITTLE MEANINGFUL DEBATE OVER WHETHER CONSCRIPTION SHOULD BE CONTINUED. ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AGREE THAT CONSCRIPTION IS A LEGITIMATE METHOD FOR MEETING FRENCH MILITARY MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS. WHAT IS BEING QUESTIONED IS WHETHER THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF CONSCRIPTION IS EFFICIENT AND EQUITABLE. TRADITIONALLY THERE HAS BEEN GENERALIZED OPPOSITION TO AN "ARMEE DE METIER," THAT IS, A "PROFESSIONAL ARMY" MANNED ENTIRELY BY VOLUNTEERS. HOWEVER, RECENTLY AT LEAST A FEW GAULLISTS, SPEAKING INDIVIDUALLY RATHER THAN FOR THE PARTY, HAVE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF REVERSING THIS. OPPOSITION TO AN ALL PROFESSIONAL ARMED FORCE IS FOUNDED ON A NUMBER OF FACTORS, NOT ALL OF WHICH ARE SHARED ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, BUT WHICH IN THEIR TOTALITY LEAD TO THE SAME CONCLUSION OPPOSING A PROFESSIONAL ARMY. THESE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03     PARIS 35782 01 OF 03 031313Z

FACTORS INCLUDE:

- MILITARY SERVICE IS A PATRIOTIC AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL FRENCHMEN.
- "UNIVERSAL" CONSCRIPTION IS SOCIALLY JUST.
- A PROFESSIONAL ARMY WOULD BE MORE EXPENSIVE BY DEFINITION, IF ENOUGH QUALIFIED PEOPLE ARE TO BE INDUCED TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO A CAREER IN

IT (ABANDONING OF CONSCRIPTION IN THE UK AND THE US ARE CITED AS EXAMPLES).

- ABANDONING CONSCRIPTION IN THE VIEWS OF AT LEAST SOME ECONOMISTS, WOULD FURTHER AGGRAVATE THE SERIOUS UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS CURRENTLY EXTANT IN FRANCE.
- A PROFESSIONAL ARMY COULD SOMEDAY CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS OF FRANCE I.E., THE FEAR OF MILITARY COUP D'ETAT.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01     PARIS 35782 02 OF 03 031254Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /074 W  
----- 108104

R 031358Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7617  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
USNMR SHAPE  
USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS  
USCINCEUR  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 35782

NOFORN

4. THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF CONSCRIPTION. DURING 1976 30 TO 35 PER CENT OF THOSE ELIGIBLE TO BE CALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY WILL HAVE BEEN EXEMPTED BECAUSE OF FAILURE TO MEET THE REQUIRED PHYSICAL OR EDUCATION STANDARDS, BECAUSE OF FAMILY HARDSHIPS, OR FOR A VARIETY OF OTHER REASONS. THUS, CONSCRIPTION IS CEASING TO BE UNIVERSAL AND THE ARGUMENT OVER WHO DOES HAVE TO SERVE BECOMES A QUESTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, ALWAYS A POLITICALLY LOADED ISSUE IN FRANCE. THESE PROBLEMS WILL  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02    PARIS 35782 02 OF 03 031254Z

BE AGGRAVATED IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AS THE NUMBERS OF YOUNG MEN REACHING DRAFT AGE WILL INCREASE. IF THE SIZE OF THE FRENCH ARMED FORCES IS REDUCED, IT HAS BEEN PREDICTED THAT BY 1980 PERHAOS ONLY 50 PER CENT OF THE ELIGIBLE MEN WILL BE INDUCTED INTO THE ARMED FORCES. THUS IN RECENT WEEKS UDR FIGURES PIERRE MESSMER (PUBLICLY), ALEXANDRE SANOUINETTI AND RETIRED ADMIRAL LOUIS SANGUINETTI (PRIVATELY) HAVE CALLED FOR CONSIDERATION OF AN ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE.

5. HOW LARGE SHOULD THE ARMED FORCES BE? IN THE CYL977 DEFENSE BUDGET PERSONNEL COSTS, OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND TRAINING WILL COMPRISE ABOUT 59 PERCENT OF THE \$12 BILLION APPROVED BY THE ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 9. ALL AGREE THAT LESS SHOULD BE SPENT ON PERSONNEL COSTS AND MORE ON R&D, INVESTMENT AND TRAINING. THE SEARCH FOR MORE INVESTMENT THEN LEADS TO CALLS FOR PERSONNEL REDUCTIONS.

6. THE CURRENT STRENGTH OF THE FRENCH ARMED FORCES IS ABOUT

- 505,000 PERSONNEL EXCLUDING THE GENDARMERIE.
- THE DEBATE ON REDUCTIONS IS FOCUSED ON THE LARGEST COMPONENT --THE ARMY-- WHICH NOW HAS AN AUTHORIZED STRENGTH OF ABOUT 330,000 OFFICERS AND MEN.

A CONSENSUS APPEARS TO BE EMERGING THAT THE ARMY SHOULD BE REDUCED. THE QUESTION IS BY HOW MUCH.

- THE DEFENSE MINISTRY HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED A REDUCTION, AS PART OF THE REORGANIZATION PLAN, FROM 330,000 TO 309,000.
- PIERRE MESSMER (ARDENT GAULLIST), FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE, IN THE ASSEMBLY DEFENSE DEBATE TOLD DEFENSE MINISTER BOURGES THE ARMY SHOULD BE REDUCED BY NO LESS

THAN 50,000. AS NOTED ABOVE MESSMER HAS ALSO CALLED FOR CONSIDERATION OF AN ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY.

-- JOEL LE THEULE (UDR DEPUTY, REPORTER FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03     PARIS 35782 02 OF 03 031254Z

DEFENSE AND FINANCE COMMITTEES OF THE ASSEMBLY) ASKED SCEPTICALLY IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN A LARGE ARMY, EVEN WITH AN INCREASING MILITARY BUDGET.

- AT THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) DIRECTING COMMITTEE MEETING THE WEEKEND PRECEDING THE ASSEMBLY DEFENSE DEBATE (REF B), CHARLES HERNU (PRESIDENT, PS DEFENSE COMMISSION) CALLED FOR AN UNSPECIFIED REDUCTION IN ARMY SIZE AS DID HIS COLLEAGUES ROBERT PONTILLON (PS INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY) AND JEAN-PIERRE CHEVENEMENT (HEAD OF CERES, THE PARTY'S LEFT WING).
- PS DEFENSE SPECIALIST JACQUES HUNTZINGER WENT A STEP FURTHER BY STATING PRIVATELY TO MEMBERS (REF B) AND PUBLICLY (INTERVIEW IN NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR OF NOVEMBER 15) THAT THE ARMY SHOULD BE REDUCED BY ABOUT 100,000 MEN. CHEVENEMENT SUBSEQUENTLY CITED THE SAME FIGURE PRIVATELY TO MEMBERS.
- THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) HAS YET TO STATE A POSITION ON REDUCTIONS, BUT IT IS RELATIVELY UNLIKELY THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD OPPOSE A REDUCTION.

7. THERE ARE OTHERS WHO WOULD SUBVERT A SMALLER ARMY FOR NON-POLITICAL REASONS:

- THE AIR FORCE AND NAVY WHO WOULD SEE IT AS A VEHICLE TO GET A BIGGER SHARE OF THE DEFENSE BUDGET FOR THEIR SERVICE.
- THE ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY AND BUREAUCRACY WHICH CONSIDER NOW THAT TOO MUCH IS GOING FOR PER-

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01     PARIS 35782 03 OF 03 031254Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /074 W

----- 108116

R 031358Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7618

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USNMR SHAPE

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 35782

NOFORN

SONNEL COSTS.

- THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT IN THE AQUE OF DETENTS,  
ARMIES SHOULD NATURALLY BE REDUCED IN SIZE.
- THE ARMY ITSELF RECOGNIZES THAT THERE COULD BE  
REWARDING TRADE-OFFS FOR MODEST REDUCTIONS.

8. IMPLICATIONS OF A SMALLER ARMY: IF ONE ACCEPTS THAT  
A CONSENSUS IS EMERGING WHICH, OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS,  
WILL LEAD TO A FRENCH ARMY REDUCED IN MANPOWER BY AS  
MUCH AS ONE-THIRD, WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS? THE FIRST  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02     PARIS 35782 03 OF 03 031254Z

REACTION IS THAT THE FRENCH ARMY WILL BE WEAKER. THAT  
MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE THE CASE. IF THE ARMY DOES  
RECEIVE BETTER EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS; IF THE OERSONNEL

CUTS ARE MADE IN MARGINAL ACTIVITIES AND UNITS (E.G., STAFFING OF MILITARY PREPARATORY SCHOOLS WHICH, DESOITE THE NAME, DO NOT FEED SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF GRADUATES INTO THE SERVICE); AND IF THE SMALLER, MORE MOBILE UNITS FORECAST IN THE ARMY REORGANIZATION PLAN ARE EFFECTIVE, A SMALLER FRENCH ARMY COULD PERHAPS APPROACH IN MILITARY EFFICIENCY THE PRESENT ONE. AT THE SAME TIME IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW A CUT OF 100,000 COULD AVOID ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES.

9. LENGTH OF SERVICE TERMS FOR CONSCRIPTS: FRENCH DRAFT- EES TODAY SERVE 12 MONTHS. THE COMMON PROGRAM OF THE LEFT ADOPTED IN 1972 CALLED FOR A REDUCTION TO SIX MONTHS SERVICE. RECENTLY PS DEFENSE FIGURES HAVE FUZZED THIS BY SAYING PERHAPS EIGHT MONTHS, PERHAPS EVEN LESS THAN SIX. THIS ISSUE IS COMPLICATED BY THE CONSCRIPTION PROBLEMS OUTLINED IN PARA 4 ABOVE. THERE IS A CERTAIN FACILE APPEAL IN SHORTENING THE ACTIVE DUTY TERM FOR CONSCRIPTS BECAUSE BY SO DOING ONE INCREASES THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO WILL BE DRAFTED, THUS PARTIALLY AVOIDING THE SOCIAL INEQUITIES IF LARGE NUMBERS OF YOUNG MEN ARE NEITHER REQUIRED NOR CONSCRIPTED. THERE IS A SOLID CONVICTION WITHIN THE PRESENT FRENCH ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP THAT SHORTENING THE SERVICE TERM CAN ONLY WEAKEN THE ARMED FORCES. IT IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO TRAIN A MAN IN 12 MONTHS; SIX MONTHS WILL TREMENDOUSLY COMPLICATE THE PROBLEM AND RAISE PERSONNEL TRAINING COSTS. THE LEFT SEEMS AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM.

10. COUNTERPOSED TO THE ARMY'S VIEW IS THE EMERGING OUTLINE OF A SOCIALIST PARTY DEFENSE SCHEME FOUNDED ON THREE PARTS:

- THE NUCLEAR DETERRENT.
  - A MOBILE INTERVENTION FORCE CAPABLE OF OPERATING BEYOND FRENCH FRONTIERS, MANNED BY "PROFESSIONALS/VOLUNTEERS."
  - A "FORCE DE MOBILIZATION POPULAIRE" (FMP) COM-
- CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03     PARIS 35782 03 OF 03 031254Z

POSED OF CONSCRIPTS, WHO HAVING HAD A SHORT TERM OF ACTIVE SERVICE WITH "INTENSIVE" TRAINING, CONSTITUTE A READY RESERVE TO BE CALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY WHEN REQUIRED.

THIS PROGRAM HAS NOT, REPEAT NOT, BEEN OFFICIALLY ADOPTED BY THE PS, BUT IT IS CURRENTLY IN VOQUE WITH HERNU, CHEVENEMENT, AND OTHERS.

11. CONCLUSIONS: THE OFFICIAL MOD POSITION NOW IS THAT

THE ARMY WILL NOT BE DRASTICALLY REDUCED, BUT BOTH WITH-  
IN THE GOF AND THE OPPOSITION, THERE IS A BURGEONING  
CONSENSUS TOWARD A SMALLER FRENCH ARMY. SHOULD THE LEFT  
WIN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN 1978, IT WOULD PROBABLY  
WANT TO SHORTEN THE ACTIVE DUTY TERM FOR CONSCRIPTS BUT  
WILL BE FACED WITH THE SAME PRACTICAL OBSTACLES ACKNOW-  
LEDGED IN FRENCH DEFENSE CIRCLES. THUS THERE IS AN  
ANOMALY CROSSING PARTY LINES IN FRENCH DEFENSE THINKING  
TODAY:

-- BROAD SUPPORT FOR AN INCREASING DEFENSE BUDGET  
BUT AT THE SAME TIME A CONVERGENCE OF E  
DISPARATE FACTIONS TOWARD AGREEMENT ON A SMALL-  
ER ARMY, WHICH, IF ANYTHING, WILL BE WEAKENED  
BY A SHORTER ACTIVE DUTY TERM FOR CONSCRIPTS.

RUSH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ARMED FORCES, POLICIES, ANNUAL REPORTS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976PARIS35782  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760447-1217  
**From:** PARIS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761275/aaaacmtn.tel  
**Line Count:** 401  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** NOFORN  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 8  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** NOFORN  
**Reference:** 76 PARIS 34006, 76 PARIS 33654  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 AUG 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** WITHDRAWN <23 MAR 2004 by morefirh, REFER TO DOD>; RELEASED <12 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by ElyME>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FRENCH DEFENSE MANPOWER: A SMALLER ARMY?  
**TAGS:** MPOL, PGOV, PINT, PARM, FR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006